

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
M.V.A. FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

by

SUZANNE MILLER

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF VISUAL ARTS

IN

PAINTING
DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1991

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

GRADUATE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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|--------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| LAGOON CORE | 1991 | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 60" X 96" |



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YEAR THIS DEGREE WAS GRANTED 1991

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend
to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a
thesis entitled:

MVA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

submitted by SUZANNE MILLER
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Visual Arts.

A R T I S T ' S S T A T E M E N T

I came to Canada to understand the North American Abstract paintings I had witnessed at home in England and that I had learnt from as a young Abstract Painter, I also desired an art environment that no longer questioned the validity of Abstract Painting. Consequently I have a new perspective on the differences between North American and European sensibilities.

My first discovery about the environment and painting here was how distinctly clarified the landscape is: its colour, light and space, and how this effects the nature of the painting.

I felt I had to make a big adjustment: I had arrived from an environment that was quite opposite, in light and colour and especially space.

My initial formal response was to become more minimal (my natural implication is to paint busy pictures). I made many paintings where I tightly controlled the evolution of the picture. I chose one flat colour ground and drew simple gestural statements on top, limiting my intuitive method. When the time came for reflection, I discovered they were not really "me". The method I was capable of, but did not get lost in, the end product felt alien and did not seem to relate completely with my subject.

The thesis paintings are the result of a direct reversal of these "minimal" pictures. I needed to be true to myself, that meant pictures that are

optimistic in nature, full of intense cluttered colour and form, and evolving in an unpredetermined spontaneous drawing.

My source subject is "undersea-life", inspired by some wonderful photographs I took at the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California. My interest in Sea Aquatic Photography continued in a collection of pictures which inspired the thesis paintings directly.

On a formal level the photographs informed my colour, space, form and texture: my creation of a certain spacial arrangement is derived from the atmosphere and sensation of deep water, both seemingly infinite and claustrophobic.

The form I chose has created a peculiar scale in each picture, due to the placement of many forms in a relatively small, intense area.

The possibility of using muted colours, as if under water was an option: but my repulsion to overt literal statement and love of intense colour persuaded me to create a colour world that is my own, but alludes to the subject and colour of the subtidal environment.

Apart from referring to the natural colour in my source photographs I was determined to work with intense colour for its emotional impact, I require a jubilant, optimistic mood in my work.

The idiosyncratic form and incredible texture in the aquatic photographs coincided with my natural taste for organic drawing and increasing interest in

textured painting, which acrylic paint gave me the freedom to discover. The "blobby" nature of the paint is almost a literal reference to organic form.

I walk between the reality of the natural subject and the creation of an abstract pictorial language in paint, that is informed and spurred by art past and present.

I choose to evoke my subjects through colour, form and texture rather than be overtly literal. I believe abstraction affords me the opportunity to express my topic and subjects on a special wavelength - received by sight alone; that which is not verbal, nor musical but is visual. A type of expression that words are too narrow for and illustration too particular.

SLIDE LIST

SUZANNE M H MILLER

| TITLE | MEDIUM | DATE | SIZE |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|------|-------------|
| DESERT OCTAVE | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1990 | 12ft x 6ft |
| LAGOON CORE | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 5ft x 8ft |
| AMAPOE | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 4ft x 5ft |
| NUDIBRA | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 5ft x 8ft |
| SYRIA | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 2ft x 3½ft |
| PORCELAINE POOL | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 2½ft x 3½ft |
| KERRY COVE | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 5ft x 8ft |
| CORAL KEY | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 4½ft x 5½ft |
| HERON AND HEART | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1990 | 8ft x 6ft |
| WODEN CAVERN | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 5ft x 8ft |
| LIZZARD BEACH | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1990 | 5ft x 8ft |
| GARDEN GALÁPAGOS | ACRYLIC AND CHARCOAL ON CANVAS | 1991 | 2ft x 2ft |
| LIME REEF | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 1991 | 4ft x 5½ft |
| THE FIRST GARDEN | ACRYLIC AND CHARCOAL ON CANVAS | 1991 | 4ft x 5ft |
| COPPER SWIRL | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 22" x 30" |
| HYDROID HAVEN | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 22" x 30" |
| CORALINE CREVICE | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 22" x 30" |
| NIDORIELLA STAR | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 22" x 30" |
| GORGONIAN | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 39" x 40" |

SLIDE LIST CONTINUED

SUZANNE M H. MILLER

| TITLE | MEDIUM | DATE | SIZE |
|--------------|--------------------------------|------|-----------|
| LIME LEVEL | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 33" x 43" |
| MANTA PATH | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 33" x 43" |
| BRITTLE KELP | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 22" x 30" |
| BLUE BLENNIE | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 22" x 30" |
| ARCHIPELAGO | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 39" x 40" |
| SEA SONG | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 30" x 36" |
| LAVA POOL | ACRYLIC AND TISSUE ON PAPER | 1991 | 30" x 36" |

